



Montana District Office

District Director
Michelle Johnston

Michelle Johnston is District Director for the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Montana District Office located in Helena. Appointed in December of 2001, Ms. Johnston is responsible for the delivery of SBA programs throughout Montana including a loan portfolio of over 2500 loans and more than \$330 million dollars, oversight of ten Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), and seven SCORE chapters, and a Women's Business Center.

Ms. Johnston began her federal career in 1974 with the Veterans Administration and moved to U.S. Geological Survey in 1976. In 1986, she transferred to the Internal Revenue Service and in 1987, came to SBA in Business Development. One of her collateral duties was the Women's Business Ownership Rep and she was honored for her work in that arena and started the very successful Women's Network for Entrepreneurial Training (WNET). She was responsible for oversight of the SBI programs (undergraduate and graduate students that wrote business plans for entrepreneurs) and three of those plans were recognized nationally. Michelle was named Chief of Entrepreneurial Development in 1996, and not only oversaw all ED programs but Government Contracting as well as the Public Information function. In 2001, she was named District Director for the District Office.

During her tenure as Director, the District Office was awarded the #1 spot in 2003 in reaching or exceeding 125% of all goals (out of 70 offices nationwide). Again, in 2006, Montana tied two other states nationwide for very small markets reaching or achieving all goals. In 2001, Montana was honored to have the National Minority Small Business of the Year; in 2004, the National Exporter of the year, and in 2006, and the 1st Runner Up for National Small Business Person of the Year.

Throughout Michelle's professional career she has served on many boards including President of the Helena YWCA, President of Business and Professional Women and a past State Business Chair. She currently serves on the board for Career Training Institute, is on the Federal Campaign Committee, as well as being a member of the American Business Women's Association.

Johnston is no stranger to small business, as she and her husband owned and operated their own small business for 34 years. They started their auto body shop in 1976, received an SBA guaranteed loan to purchase the real estate in 1979, and grew it into a profitable and successful enterprise. She is proud to have been a small business owner and knows first-hand the trials and tribulations of owning a small business can bring. In February of this year, they sold their business to their son and daughter-in-law. Both Johnston and her husband are Montana natives and have two adult children, Heather and Travis as well as two grandchildren.